

HAMBRIDGE & WESTPORT PARISH COUNCIL

The Planning Inspectorate
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Temple Quay House
2 The Square, Temple Quay,
BRISTOL
BS1 6PN

Old Post Office
Post Office Row
Hambridge
Somerset
TA10 0BA

29th October 2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

Reference APP/R3325/W/21/3279946

Proposal: Application to vary condition 2 (approved plans) of planning approval 18/02149/FUL and as amended 19/02771/S73 to allow a minor increase in roof height, to ensure buildability and a continuous parapet.

Location: Land Adjacent Burgum Westport Langport TA10 0BH

I am writing on behalf of Hambridge & Westport Parish Council to state that we are against the above detail appeal proposals. I would be grateful if you would consider our reasons for our wish for this appeal to be refused. This development has generated very strong feelings among some residents and the Parish Council from the very outset and I hope that this document will provide some insight as to why this appeal should in our opinion, be refused.

21/00181/S73A | Application to vary condition 2 (approved plans) of planning approval 18/02149/FUL and as amended 19/02771/S73 to allow a minor increase in roof height, to ensure buildability and a continuous parapet. | Land Adjacent Burgum Westport Langport TA10 0BH

This application was generated as a direct result of residents complaining to the Parish Council (PC) about the overall height of the development and its domination of the landscape. There were concerns that the building was higher than the previously granted planning applications had permitted.

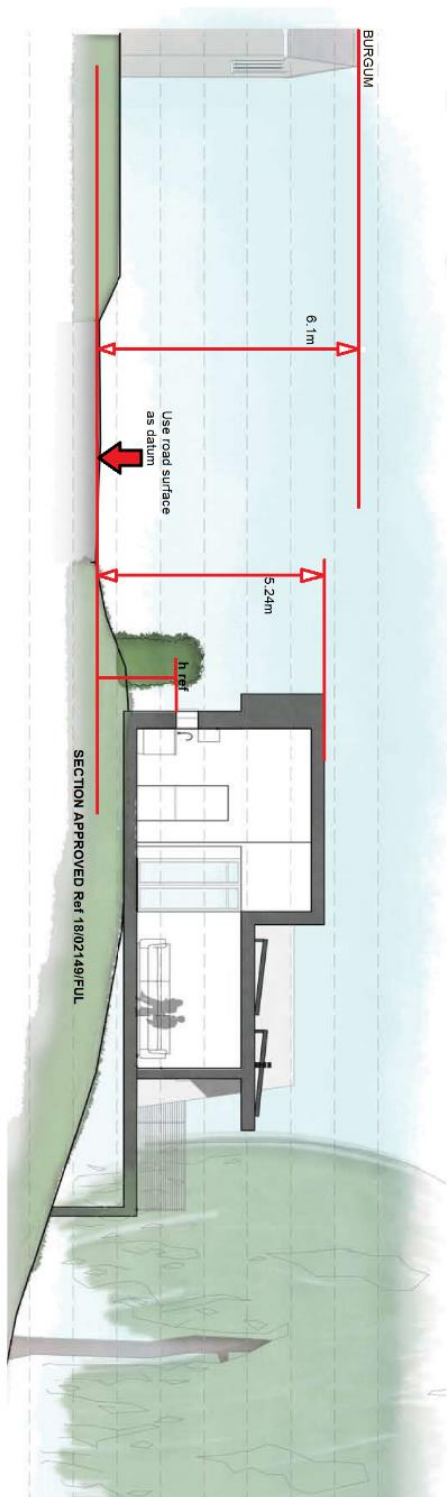
Following a request from the PC (26/11/20 email to Tim Wills), SSDC carried out a measurement of the height of the structure & confirmed that the height of the building was higher than planned.

It is important to note that this height measurement was made between the finished floor level and the parapet – not using the road surface as a datum/reference point.

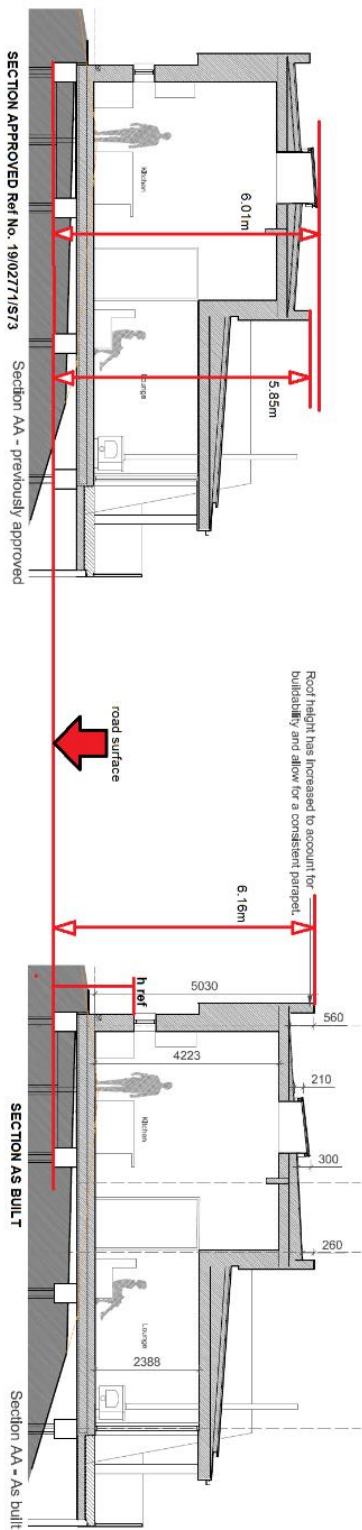
It is a major concern that the original drawings submitted (upon which planning permission was granted) referenced the property sited on the opposite side of the road (Burgum). Subsequent drawings that have been submitted with further applications conveniently do not reference this building. The comparison to the height of the opposite building does provide perspective on the impact to the surrounding environment.

Below is a copy of the latest submitted section of the building to which I have added estimated dimensions. These dimensions have been deduced using the scaling provided on the drawing and are therefore not exact, but do give an indication to illustrate the situation. The best accuracy that can be obtained from these drawings (in the format provided to the PC) is a resolution of 1 metre.

Based on the original drawing, I have used the road surface as a datum/reference to establish the heights of Burgum and the development heights for each of the shown application stages.



Section AA - previously approved
Approved section prepared by BoonBrown Architects ©



SECTION AS BUILT

Section AA - As built

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 metres

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revision	revision date	date
A	03.10.19	16.09.19
B	04.01.21	11.10.21
C	05.01.21	05.01.21
D - Section revised to show as built	05.01.21	12/11/2021

VOC Proposed Section AA
scale 1:100 @ A3
12/11/2021

orne

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Using this approach indicates that the overall height of the development now exceeds the height of the property opposite. This is also evident from the photos given below (fig 1) and has had an impact on the scale and appearance of the property. The property has become the dominant structure within the locality (photos are listed at the end of this document)

It must be argued that the overall height of a development cannot be determined by measurement of the distance between finished floor level & parapet – this would be totally invalid if the base level upon which the building is constructed is raised in height before construction.

There have been a number of applications made to make allowance for deviations to the originally granted configuration. In all cases this has resulted in an increase in height of the development.

The PC has objected to all previous applications for a range of reasons that are not going to be detailed in this document. As a PC we respect that the decision to permit planning permission was granted, however it is evident that there has been a succession of permitted changes that has allowed the height of the building to increase. Yet again we find ourselves in the situation that an application has been made to permit a breach to the previous application. It is also important to note that this latest application was only raised as a result of complaints from residents reporting the additional height to the PC and not as part of the ongoing management of the development. If unchecked what other breaches will occur? This development has not yet been completed.

As part of the previous successful application (Ref. No: 19/02771/S73) Colin Arnold, the Planning Officer created a report (Officer Report On Planning Application 19/02771/S73 page 4) that contains the following statement regarding the Scale and Appearance:

“The alterations to the height does mean that the building will be more prominent in the street scene but one has to assess whether this impact is acceptable. There are two storey properties across the road from the site and this will not be dominant when viewed in their context. It is considered that the increase in height will not render the development unacceptable or unduly prominent. In essence a five metres high dwelling can easily be accommodated on this site without harm”.

The Parish Council strongly disagree with the statement made at the time and permitting yet a further increase in height to this building, will further contradict this statement. The structure dominates the surrounding area and **is** the most prominent feature.

To consider this as a single-story building which is as high or perhaps higher, than the two-storey property opposite, is stretching the imagination. Despite requests made, we have yet to see a measurement of the overall height of the structure using the road surface as a datum.

Cited as the reason for the application is ‘to ensure buildability’. If the original design must be continually reviewed to allow the structure to be built, then surely this is down to poor design on the part of the architect or poor management of the build. It is unacceptable that our residents be required to accept changes to be made because of a failing in the design or construction.

Why has SSDC continued to permit changes to the development to accommodate these errors? If planning has been granted on the condition that the development is constructed to the constraints of the agreed design, then why are these changes allowed – surely the previously agreed constraints should be enforced? If not, then what is the point of the current planning process or indeed the point of providing drawings and a specification etc. against which a development is constructed?

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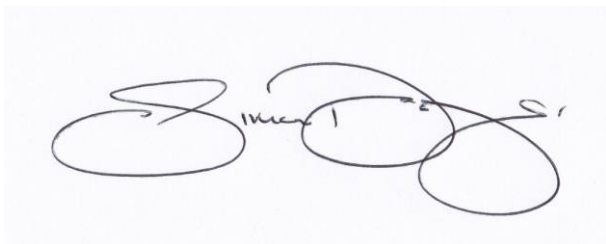
The PC have endeavoured to relay the concerns of the residents at every stage of this development and have made objections on their behalf. Despite this, the SSDC have chosen to repeatedly grant permission on all previous applications with regard to changing the height. I have been told by more than one resident that their impression of the Parish Council is that it is totally ineffective with respect to obtaining enforcement or action to what are perceived as breaches in planning. This totally undermines the role of the Parish Council. How can we instil confidence that the PC can effectively represent the community in such matters when there appears to be little or no enforcement for apparent serial non-compliance to previously permitted restrictions?

This has been an application by attrition and the accumulated effects of the design inconsistencies is a clear case of planning by stealth.

Although the application to increase the height of the roof is described as a minimal adjustment, the starting datum from the outset was clearly ignored and the overall effect of this building is to dominate the street scene completely. It seems to be wholly out of character with anything else in the area and is not sympathetic to the vernacular architecture of this area. The close proximity of the structure to the road exacerbates the problem as the building totally obliterates the landscape, which is otherwise flat and overwhelms the occupier of the dwellings on the west side of the road.

I would like to thank you for providing us this opportunity to put forward the concerns of our community and sincerely hope that the inspectorate considers the issues raised by the Parish Council and refuse this appeal.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Denley', written over a light blue grid background.

Simon Denley

Chairman
Hambridge & Westport Parish Council

Images on following pages

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IMAGES



Fig 1 Viewed from South



Fig 2 Viewed from South

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Fig 3 Viewed from North 1



Fig 4 Viewed from North 2